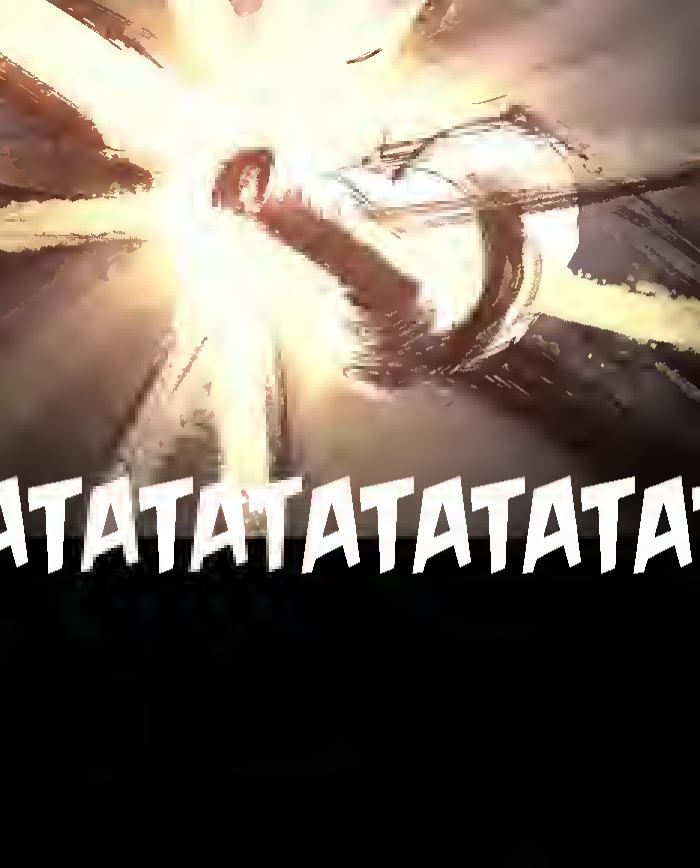
The Strange Tales of Oscar Zahn

THE LAST SOLDIER OF SOMME

ACT 3

CHAPTER 2


ATATATATATATATATA

MACHINE GUN!!! EVERYBODY HIT THE DECK!!!!
AGGHH!!!
MORGAN! PARSONS! FLANK LEFT!

HARPER! TAKE OUT THAT GUN BEFORE IT CHEWS US AP-

SARGE!!!

DAMMIT!!!
HOLD ON EVERYBODY!!!

JEEZ!

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU?!!

ATATATATATATATATA
MORGAN!
NO!!!!

AND NOW, FRIENDS, WE FIND OURSELVES AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY ONCE MORE, PERHAPS NOW WITH A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THINGS CAME TO BE.

IT TAKES APPROXIMATELY A POUND

OF PRESSURE TO PULL THE TRIGGER ON A RIFLE.

.. AT THIS MOMENT THE BALANCE OF CHARLIE HARPER'S LIFE WEIGHED EXACTLY ONE POUND...

... THIS IS THE STORY OF A RIFLE TOO YOU'LL RECALL...

THE ROSS RIFLE, A WEAPON ILL SUITED TO THE RIGOURS OF WAR PRONE AS IT WAS TO JAMMING...

... AND BACKFIRING.

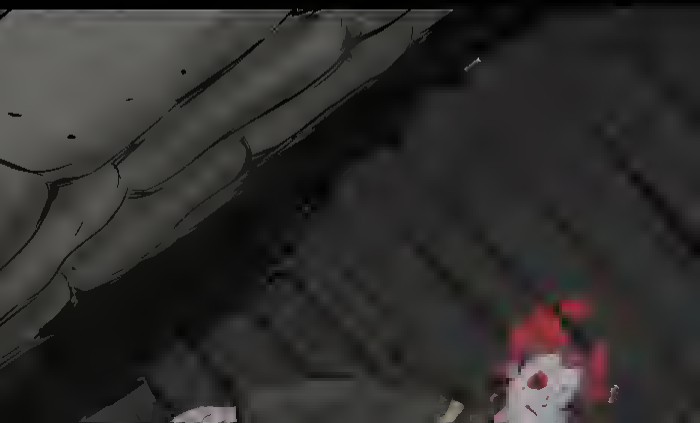
A WEAPON AS DANGEROUS TO THOSE IN FRONT OF IT...

... AS THOSE BEHIND IT...

ON THE MORNING OF JULY 1ST, 1916 PRIVATE CHARLIE HARPER OF ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND DIED DUE TO A MALFUNCTION OF HIS OWN RIFLE DURING THE TRAGIC ADVANCE ON BEAUMONT HAMEL.

BY THE END OF THE DAY, CASUALTIES FROM BOTH SIDES TOTALLED OVER 70,000 BOYS.

THIS WAS THE FIRST DAY OF THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME.



THE FIGHTING WOULD CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER FOUR MONTHS BEFORE THE ALLIES MANAGED TO PUSH THE CENTRAL POWERS OUT.

BY THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN, CASUALTIES NUMBERED OVER 1.5 MILLION.

A GENERATION OF YOUNG MEN DIED ON THAT BATTLEFIELD, SACRIFICED TO THE MACHINE OF WAR.

DEATH ON SUCH A SCALE CANNOT BE THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS. LIFE DOES NOT CONTINUE UNFETTERED IN THE WAKE OF SUCH CALAMITY.

THE DEAD HAUNT THOSE FIELDS, THE IRON SCENT OF THEIR BLOOD SOAKING THE SOIL WHERE THEIR BODIES LIE...

... AND WITHIN IT...

SOMETHING DARK, SEETHING AND UGLY IS BORN.

CHARLIE HARPER, DUE THE UNEXPECTED, TRAGIC

AND ADMITTEDLY ABSURD NATURE OF HIS DEATH WAS SPARED SOME OF THE ANGUISH OF HIS COMPATRIOTS.

BUT IN DEATH, HE WOULD FIND THAT HIS GREATEST BATTLE WAS YET TO COME.

TO BE CONTINUED...

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

WELCOME BACK EVERBODY! WELP, WE NOW KNOW HOW POOR CHARLIE BOUGHT THE FARM. I KNEW I WOULD EVENTUALLY GET TO THIS POINT BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE TO WRITE THIS PART OF THE STORY. CHARACTERS DO REALLY TAKE ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN AFTER A WHILE.

BUT FEAR NOT. DEATH IS NOT THE END OF CHARLIE'S STORY, HE HAS SOMETHING MUCH GREATER HE NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH SO COME BACK NEXT WEEK AS WE ACCELERATE TOWARDS CHARLIE'S ULTIMATE DESTINY!

BTW, I REALLY ENJOYED READING EVERYBODY'S COMMENTS LAST WEEK AND I'M ESPECIALLY HEARTENED TO SEE THE WARMTH AND WELL WISHES EVERYBODY EXTENDED TOWARDS ME AND EACH OTHER, ESPECIALLY DURING SUCH A TRYING TIME. MAKES ME FEEL HOPEFUL!

I ALSO WANTED TO GIVE A SHOUT OUT TO A FEW PEOPLE THAT PLEDGED TO MY PATREON THIS WEEK. BIG THANKS GOES TO:

BETSY L.
HAUKE M.

YOUR SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

IF YOU ARE ENJOYING THE COMIC PLEASE CLICK THE "LIKE" BUTTON, IT REALLY HELPS OUT!

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